

Message Text

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73

ACTION SS-30

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1278

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 4925

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR UN SY US

1. DEPUTY PERM REP JOUEJATI OF SYRIA APPROACHED AMBASSADOR BENNETT NOVEMBER 19 TO SAY THAT HIS LONG PENDING TRANSFER HOME TO DAMASCUS WAS NOW DEFINITELY SCHEDULED AND HE WAS DUE TO REPORT IN DAMASCUS EARLY DURING WEEK NOVEMBER 26. JOUEJATI STRESSED HIS DESIRE TO WORK FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIA AND US AND PLEDGED THAT HE WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY OPPORTUNITY THAT WOULD COME HIS WAY IN HIS NEW DUTIES WHICH INCLUDED BEING CHEF DE CABINET TO FONMIN. AT ONE POINT IN A BURST OF FRIENDLY EMPHASIS, JOUEJATI SAID HE WOULD COMMIT HIMSELF TO ARRANGE THE RELEASE OF THE AMERICAN NOW BEING HELD IN SYRIA.

2. BENNETT TOOK UP JOUEJATI'S PROMISE AND STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF RELEASE OF BATES. BENNETT SAID THIS COULD BE IMPORTANT STEP IN PROGRESS TOWARD BETTER SYRIAN-US RELATIONS WHICH HE KNEW WE BOTH DESIRED TO ACHIEVE. BENNETT SUGGESTED TO JOUEJATI HE WAS GOING HOME AT A CRITICAL AND CHALLENGING TIME. IF THINGS WENT RIGHT OVER NEXT FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS, WE WERE AT A POINT WHERE BASIC IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF US-SYRIAN RELATIONS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED.

BENNETT

CONFIDENTIAL

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